Edenbridge Town Council

EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

Full Council | 02 November 2026 | Short Agenda (Excludes Confidential Items) | v:1

To Councillors: J **Aldridge** *(Vice-Chairman)*, A **Baker** *(Chairwoman)*, S **Compton**, M **Gemmell Smith**, C **Jacques**, A **Layland**, M **McArthur**, S **McGregor**, V **Parker**, A **Read**, M **Stockdale**, J **Streets**, B **Todd**.

Notice is hereby given of a Council Meeting of Edenbridge Town Council to be held in Rickards Hall on 2 November 2026 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
28 October 2026

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting. Council Meetings may be recorded.

Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Agenda

In view of the confidential nature of Agenda Items 19, 20, 21 to be discussed, the Chairwoman will move that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1	**To Receive Apologies for Absence**		3
2	**Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**		3
3	**Public Questions and Statements**		3
4	**To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 (pages 2023-149/1-9).**		3
5	**To receive County and District Councillors Reports**		3
	5.1	County Councillor	3
	5.2	District Councillors	3
6	**To adopt the following reports/minutes of committee meetings**		3
	6.1	To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meetings held on 14 September 2026 (pages 2023-151/1-5) and 5 October 2026 (pages 2023-153/1-1).	3
	6.2	To receive and adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 21 September 2026 (pages 2023-152/1-7).	3
	6.3	To receive and adopt the minutes of the Buildings & Leases Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2026 (pages 2023-150/1-4).	3
	6.4	To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 19 October 2026 (pages 2023-154/1-5).	3
7	**To receive recommendations from Committees**		3
	7.1	Finance & Governance Committee - meeting 19 October	4
		7.1.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 – External Audit Update	4
		7.1.2 Introduction of a New Buildings Cost Centre – 2027/28 Budget	4

8 **To receive reports and recommendations from the Town Clerk and Officers; Working Groups; and Delegated Reports** 4

8.1 Clerk's report 4

8.2 Communications Officer's report 6

8.3 Remembrance Sunday 8 November 8

9 **Sevenoaks District Emerging Local Plan - Regulation 19 update** 9

10 **Forward Planning and Budget Considerations 2027/28** 10

11 **Councillor Training and Strategic Planning – Budget Provision 2027/28** 12

11.1 Breakthrough Communications – Training and Support Subscription 12

11.2 Councillor Training 13

11.3 Strategic Planning and Visioning Session 13

12 **Matters arising from the minutes for report and not elsewhere on the agenda** 13

12.1 McMillian Coffee Morning Friday 25 September 2026 - feedback 13

12.2 Remote and hybrid meetings facilities - update 14

12.2.1 Meeting Facilities for Doggetts Barn - to approve the expenditure of £2,625.52 14

12.3 Pavilion – Mains water supply project: update and next steps 14

12.4 Planning Committee – Review of Membership 16

12.5 Edenbridge Food Bank – Lease Agreement 16

13 **OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision** 17

13.1 NABMA Annual Conference and Market Team Award ; and to ratify the expenditure of £435 17

13.2 Annual Health & Safety Audit – 28 September 2026 18

13.3 Rickards Hall - Police Engagement Location 18

14 **Local Government Reorganisation - Update** 18

15 **Unpaid invoices over 6-months - outstanding Market Pitch Fees** 19

16 **Consultations** 19

17 **To receive reports from councillors who have attended meetings of outside bodies** 19

18 **Press release** 19

19 **[CONFIDENTIAL] Council Property Matters – To consider and approve expenditure for legal advice relating to existing property arrangements.** 20

20 **[CONFIDENTIAL] HMRC VAT Review – Confidential Report** 21

21 **[CONFIDENTIAL] Sevenoaks Local Plan - SDC Council Meeting, 1 December 2026** 23

22 **Date of Next meeting - 07 December** 23

Meeting Papers & Report

1 **To Receive Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**
The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

Members are reminded to the Code of Conduct, and Appendix B - Registering interests and non participation.

3 **Public Questions and Statements**
Members of the public, and members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for members of the public to make a contribution during the meeting.)

Both public and members are limited to three minutes per person to speak and the total time designated for public questions shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4 **To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 (pages 2023-149/1-9).**
Full Council | 07 September 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-149/1-9)

5 **To receive County and District Councillors Reports**

5.1 **County Councillor**

5.2 **District Councillors**

6 **To adopt the following reports/minutes of committee meetings**

6.1 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meetings held on 14 September 2026 (pages 2023-151/1-5) and 5 October 2026 (pages 2023-153/1-1).**
Members are asked to also note that meeting of 5 October was not quorate, so did not take place.
Planning and Transport | 14 September 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-151/1-5)
Planning and Transport | 05 October 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-153/1-1)

6.2 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 21 September 2026 (pages 2023-152/1-7).**
Open Spaces | 21 September 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-152/1-7)

6.3 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Buildings & Leases Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2026 (pages 2023-150/1-4).**
Buildings & Leases Committee | 11 September 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-150/1-4)

6.4 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 19 October 2026 (pages 2023-154/1-5).**
Finance and Governance | 19 October 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-154/1-5)

7 **To receive recommendations from Committees**

7.1 **Finance & Governance Committee - meeting 19 October**

7.1.1 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 – External Audit Update**

The Finance & Governance Committee received an update on the 2025/26 AGAR and the delay in receiving the completed external audit report from Mazars.

Members noted that the AGAR had been submitted within the required timescales. During the audit review, a minor discrepancy of £1,405.08 was identified in the fixed asset register, relating to a software data error following the transfer of records to the EDGE IT system in 2024/25. This has since been corrected, with a full explanation provided to the External Auditor on 27 August. On 23 September, the external auditor advised although relatively small in value, this was considered the discrepancy material for the purposes of Box 9 of the AGAR. Following consideration of the options, the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk/RFO agreed to proceed without amending the submitted AGAR, accepting that this would result in a qualification in the external audit report.

As the external audit was not received/completed by the statutory publication deadline of 30 September 2026, an interim notice explaining the delay has been published on the Council's website and noticeboard, in accordance with the External Auditor's guidance.

The Council is still awaiting the signed AGAR and completed external audit report. Officers understand that these are progressing through the auditor's system and anticipate receiving them shortly. Once received, the audited AGAR, external audit report and Notice of Conclusion of Audit will be published as required.

Finance & Governance Committee Recommendation

That Council notes the update regarding the 2025/26 AGAR, the outstanding external audit report and the publication of the interim notice pending completion of the audit.

7.1.2 **Introduction of a New Buildings Cost Centre – 2027/28 Budget**

The Finance & Governance Committee has considered and supported the proposal to introduce a separate Buildings Cost Centre as part of the 2027/28 budget, to distinguish expenditure relating to the maintenance and upkeep of Council-owned buildings from operational service costs. This also reflects the new management with the Buildings & Leases Committee.

Finance & Governance Committee Recommendation

That Council approves the introduction of a new Buildings Cost Centre, using the 700 series for income and 7000 series for expenditure, with officers to allocate the relevant budgets as part of the preparation of the 2027/28 budget.

8 **To receive reports and recommendations from the Town Clerk and Officers; Working Groups; and Delegated Reports**

8.1 **Clerk's report**

Bandstand project: This project is being overseen through the Open Spaces Committee.

The Planning application was submitted early October which included the Design and Access Statement from the architecture, and the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). SDC said the application was invalidated due to some inconsistences in the explanation which has been address, but we also need to obtain an arboricultural assessment – we have received a quote and requested the report.

Building Bridges for Dementia Friendly Edenbridge: This is on hold due to lack of training provision.

Budgets: The Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk has started the preparation for the new budgets, this will be presented to the Open Spaces and Open Spaces Committee, with the Finance Committee receiving the full draft budget at its meeting on 23 November.

Byelaws update: MHCLG has confirmed it is still receiving these.

Councillor Vacancies – Update: At the Council's September meeting (which was absent from), Council agreed to defer filling the two councillor vacancies until the May 2027 elections. Since that decision, the Planning Committee has experienced difficulties maintaining a quorum, with a recent meeting unable to proceed due to insufficient Members being present. The Committee currently has two vacancies, which reduces its flexibility when Members are unable to attend.

Under Standing Order 7, a Council resolution cannot be reversed within six months unless a special motion is submitted in writing by at least ten Councillors, or a motion is brought forward following a recommendation from a committee or subcommittee.

With the decision to leave the vacancies unfilled until May 2027, it is therefore important that existing Councillors make every effort to attend their committee meetings to ensure that Council business can continue and meetings remain quorate.

Looking ahead to the May elections, I also wish to highlight the importance of encouraging residents to become involved in the Council. Co-option can provide an opportunity for prospective Councillors to gain experience of the role before deciding whether to stand for election, while allowing existing Members to share their knowledge and experience ahead of the new Council term.

Members are asked to note the update and the importance of maintaining sufficient attendance at committee meetings to ensure the continued effective operation of Council business.

Cyber Security, Data Management: This is part of our longer-term protect of enhancements. We have met with PS Tech, and are still awaiting on PS Technology's report, and quote. For now, the current arrangements are satisfactory.

Emergency Planning Committee: The last meeting was 21 May. It is hope to schedule another meeting before the end of the year.

GDPR – Data Processing Agreements: As part of the Council's ongoing GDPR compliance review, we are continuing reviewing the Data Processing Agreements with external service providers who process personal data on behalf of the Council, including EDGE, Council Papers and PS Technology. The review is ongoing to ensure that appropriate agreements are in place and reflect current data processing arrangements.

Great Stone Bridge Trust: Having met with the GSBT to review the Council's arrangement for the grounds management works at the Water Meadows, we have agreed to prepare a new Agreement. Whilst the practicalities and the funding arrangements will remain much the same, some of the detail in the current Agreement is superfluous.

Highways Improvement Plan: A meeting with the Highways Engagement Officer, and County Councillor Mayall is arranged for early November to discuss Edenbridge matters. The annual HIP review is expected in February/March.

Interim Internal Audit: A date for late November has been confirmed. Our auditor has confirmed he will carry out the end-of-year audit, but is retiring in 2027 (reported to last Council meeting). We will look for a replacement auditor and present to Governance next year.

Kent Wildlife Trust - Rights of Rivers Initiative: At the September meeting, members nominated Cllrs Aldridge, Baker and McArthur to work with NEDRA.

Kybo Solar Farm - Community Benefit Fund: The legal agreement is completed. We await the funds, and will then start to investigate additional suitable EVC locations.

Leases update

Forge Musical Theatre Group: We understand the Group is looking to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). A meeting to review discuss proceeding with the draft lease will hopefully take place in November.

Food Bank: The draft lease remains with the Food Bank, but we have discussed some of the concerns and hoping that we all work now to agreeing the details.

Marsh Green Playground: The new playground at Marsh Green is complete, and was officially opened on 7 October. It has been received extremely well by pre-school and local residents using the facility.

Old Memorial Hospital site: Cllrs Baker and Aldridge, and myself met with the new landowners of the former War Memorial Hospital site and their architect, early October. Initial discussions included the future of the site and the War Memorial. The owners have also kindly agreed to allow the annual Remembrance Sunday service to take place at the Memorial, together with access for the Council's Grounds Team to tidy the area beforehand.

Personnel Committee: The next meeting is Friday 6 November, 11.00am.

Quality Council Status: The Town Clerk and Communications Officer are continuing to collate evidence required for the Quality Council submission.

Station Approach - Reintroduction of Parking Charges: Council has written to GTR to campaign for the lifting of the new charges. Following a response saying that they are willing to discuss the charges and understand whether there are any practical steps that could be considered, the Tourism Officers has liaised with the users of the hall and a further email is being sent to GTR.

Spatial Settlement Plan (SSP+) – update: Following Council's decision to proceed with Spatial Settlement Plan (SSP), a meeting to discuss the initial phases has been arranged for early November with the planning consultant company.

8.2 **Communications Officer's report**

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the communications officer between March and October. A particular highlight was Edenbridge Market receiving the Small Market Team of the Year award at the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Great British Market Awards, following a submission earlier in the year. This recognition reflects the ongoing work to manage, support and promote the market. Another significant achievement was being recognised by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) as an example of best practice in the use of social media, which led to an invitation to share our approach and experience with councils across the country. The Town Clerk and I were invited to present at one on NALC's webinars on Edenbridge Town Council's approach and platforms.

Looking ahead, alongside day-to-day communications activities, work will continue to focus on supporting Edenbridge Market and Visit Edenbridge initiatives, including the development of the Town Guide. A key priority will be preparing to celebrate Edenbridge Market's 800th anniversary in 2027, an important milestone and opportunity to raise the market's profile. Communications support will also be provided to the Town Clerk as part of the Council's application for the Quality Council Award.

WEBSITE/GOOGLE

- Day-to-day management .
- Arranged annual accessibility review of ETC and VE websites and published statements. Followed up on action points, including updated Accessibility Statements.
- New policies uploaded.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Generated regular content such as posts, reels, stories, events and cover photos to communicate Council activity and matters of interest.
- Shared partner content and information relevant to Edenbridge residents.

EDENBRIDGE MAGAZINE (BI-MONTHLY)

- Produced double-page spreads to communicate the Council's activities, news and events.

PRESS RELEASES

- Sent press releases to various media. Examples include Council's first apprentice completes qualification, Civic Medallions celebrates local leadership with an article also in the SLCC May magazine, and Small Market Team of the Year Award.

ANNUAL REPORT

- Produced and published the Annual Report 2025-26.

NALC

- Delivered an online presentation with the Clerk to share our experience of using social media with around 100 other parish and town councils from across the country.

LOCAL PLAN

- Helped to promote Sevenoaks District Council's Regulation 19 publication and encouraged community engagement using various channels.
- Produced a 4pp A4 leaflet, which was delivered direct to households. This also gave details of the Town Council's second round of drop-in sessions.

AWARDS & GRANTS

- Received Small Market Team of the Year award from NABMA for Edenbridge Market.
- Promoted our 2026 SSEIB Awards for Edenbridge's Open Spaces.
- Promoted ETC CIL and Grant application windows.

VISIT EDENBRIDGE

- Promoted the new walk leaflets and town trails.
- Collaborated with Kent and Sussex Walks Instagram influencers (as well as Edenbridge Chamber of Commerce & Eden Bakes) to gain more exposure for Edenbridge Market, the High Street and our walks leaflets via social media and websites.

EDENBRIDGE MARKET

- Produced new (no parking) signs for the market walkway.
- Ordered new gazebos with branding.
- Ordered a new sail flag so the market is more visible on Thursdays.
- Produced a trader newsletter.
- As above, collaborated with Kent & Sussex Walks to promote the market and traders.

OPEN SPACES

- New 'scoop your poop' signage, and dog bag dispensers signage.
- Started playground signage review

EVENTS/ACTIVITES

Annual Town Meeting

- Uploaded presentation to website and promoted on social media.

Great British Spring Clean

- Worked with SDC and Community Warden to promote a joint litter pick.

Councillor Surgeries

- Promoted dates and additional drop-in at the health centre.

Family Fun Days

- Promoted over the summer.

Chairman's Reception/Edenbridge Gardens In Bloom

- Designed invites and certificates, and publicised event/winners.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

- Helped promote this councillor event.

Marsh Green Playground

- Communicated the new playground before, during and on completion of the project
- Produced new park signage.

Remembrance Sunday

- Communicated event details for 8 and 11 November.
- Produced new signage for event and road closure notice.

PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Helped communicate various news, information and consultations where relevant to Edenbridge residents. Included road closures and SDC changes to bulky waste, food waste and bin collections.

8.3 **Remembrance Sunday 8 November**

Following the report at the September meeting, a further meeting has been help to finalise details for this year annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service on Sunday 8 November 2026. Arrangements follow the format of previous years. The parade will set off from Leathermarket car park at 10.30am. Those joining the parade are asked to be there for

10.15am.

The road closure is in place from 10.15 am to 11.35 am (reopening for 10minutes from 10.55am)

Order of Events

10.15 am - Participants meet at Leathermarket car park and assemble for the parade.

10.30 am - Parade leaves Leathermarket car park, under the direction of the Parade Marshal.

10.45 am - Parade arrives at the War Memorial at the former War Memorial Hospital site and participants assemble for the service.

10.50 am - Announcements and wreath layers invited to assemble, followed by the introduction and opening prayers.

10.58 am - Last Post.

11.00 am - Two-minute silence.

11.02 am - Reveille, followed by wreath laying, blessing, the first verse of God Save the King and the Epitaph.

11.15–11.20 am - Participants assemble for the return parade to Leathermarket car park, where the Parade Marshal will dismiss the parade.

2.30 pm - Church Service.

Members are asked to attend both events.

Members are also asked to note with the Remembrance Sunday falling the day after the Edenbridge Bonfire Society event on Saturday 7 November, the Bonfire Society will be unable to assist with marshalling. The Community Warden has contacted local groups seeking volunteers to assist with the event. ECCA, TAG, and NEDRA have all provided volunteers together with council officers.

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/edenbridge-remembers-8-and-11-november-2026/

9 **Sevenoaks District Emerging Local Plan - Regulation 19 update**

Following Council's consideration of the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan at its September meeting, the Town Council has now completed and submitted its representations to the Regulation 19 consultation. Due to unforeseen personal circumstances, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) agreed to a short extension to enable the Town Council to finalise its submissions.

The Council's representations have been published on its website and are available for residents and interested parties to view.

At the end of September, SDC's Development Management Committee refused a planning application for approximately 800 dwellings at the former Broke Hill Golf Course site. This site represents the third-largest proposed housing allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

The application was refused on Green Belt grounds, which raises questions regarding the site's continued inclusion and deliverability within the emerging Local Plan. Although the refusal of a planning application does not automatically prevent a site from being allocated through the Local Plan process, it does introduce further uncertainty as to how SDC will demonstrate that the proposed housing can be delivered.

The Regulation 19 Local Plan already identifies a housing supply shortfall of approximately 222 dwellings against an overall requirement exceeding 17,000 homes. Whilst this represents a relatively small proportion of the overall housing requirement, the refusal of a major development site could have wider implications for the Plan's housing supply position, depending on how SDC addresses the decision.

At this stage, it is unclear how these matters may be considered through the Examination in Public, including whether the Planning Inspector will consider modifications to the proposed allocations or seek further evidence regarding the ability of the Plan to meet its housing requirement.

SDC is expected to consider and confirm the submission of the Local Plan for independent examination at its Council meeting in December 2026.

The Town Council will continue to monitor developments, particularly any implications for the proposed allocations within Edenbridge, and further updates will be provided as the Local Plan progresses.

Members are asked to note the update and the completion of the Town Council's Regulation 19 representations.

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/public-consultations/sevenoaks-district-local-plan/

10 **Forward Planning and Budget Considerations 2027/28**

Each year, the Forward Planning Steering Group (FPSG) meets to review the Town Council's aspirations, ongoing and proposed projects, and any financial implications which may need to be considered as part of the annual budget-setting and precept process.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances and competing commitments, it has not been possible for the Town Clerk to co-ordinate a meeting of the Steering Group this year.

However, as this is the final year of the current Council term, and the newly elected Council will have the opportunity to review its vision, priorities and aspirations for the following four years, the Town Clerk, in discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chairman, considered it appropriate to review the existing budget provisions and earmarked reserves rather than undertake a wider forward-planning exercise at this stage.

The following proposals reflect previous Council decisions, existing commitments and anticipated requirements. Members are asked to consider whether these should be incorporated into the draft 2027/28 budget.

Budget Provisions and Earmarked Reserves

1. **Local Plan – Professional Fees:** Provision of £10,000 for professional fees to support the Town Council's representation at the Examination in Public of the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan. The 2026/27 budget included provision for this work, with expenditure to date of approximately £6,000.
2. **Professional Reports:** Provision of £5,000 to be allocated to an earmarked reserve for professional advice and reports that may be required to support Council projects and strategic planning matters. The 2026/27 budget included £5,000 towards the preparation of the Spatial Settlement Plan.
3. **Neighbourhood Plan Earmarked Reserve:** Maintain the reserve at a minimum of £15,000 to support the potential preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, given the uncertainty surrounding future CIL receipts and the availability of external grant funding, Members may wish to consider increasing this reserve to £20,000, using any available surplus arising from the 2026/27 financial year.
4. **Buildings Earmarked Reserve:** Maintain the reserve at a minimum of £120,000 to provide for future major repairs and maintenance of Council-owned buildings. Member want to consider increasing this in view of recent report on its Listed buildings, and

future repairs.
5. **Equipment, Tools and Vehicles Earmarked Reserve:** Continue to budget at least £4,000 annually towards future vehicle replacements.
6. **Local Government Reorganisation and Community Assets Earmarked Reserve:** To continue with a further £5,000 to support potential costs associated with Local Government Reorganisation.
7. **Strategic Plan Projects Earmarked Reserve:** Allocate a further £10,000 to the reserve, established in 2025, to support the future delivery of Council projects and priorities.

Financial Considerations

Members will be mindful of the continuing cost-of-living pressures affecting residents and businesses, as well as the increasing costs faced by the Town Council itself.

Both the current and previous Councils have worked hard to restore the Council's finances and reserves to a healthy and sustainable position. Maintaining this financial stability should remain a priority, particularly given the uncertainty surrounding future CIL funding available to parish and town councils, and the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation and the establishment of new unitary authorities.

The Finance & Governance Committee will consider the draft 2027/28 budget at its meeting on 23 November and make recommendations to Full Council in December, including the proposed precept requirement.

The proposals outlined above are therefore intended to inform that process, with the final budget and precept decisions remaining subject to Council approval.

Forward Plan Review

A review of the Council's existing Forward Plan indicates that many of the aspirations and priorities remain relevant. An updated copy, including comments on progress and current considerations, is attached for Members' information.

A link to the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, submitted as part of its Regulation 19 Local Plan representations, is also provided as this identifies a number of infrastructure priorities which may inform future planning and investment decisions.

Following the May 2027 elections, it is proposed that the newly elected Council participates in a visioning and forward-planning training session to consider its aspirations and strategic priorities for the next four-year term.

A separate agenda item will invite Members to consider and confirm a proposed Council and Councillor training budget to support this and other training requirements.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. **Consider and confirm the proposed budget provisions and earmarked reserve priorities outlined above, to inform the Finance & Governance Committee's consideration of the draft 2027/28 budget.**
2. **Consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan Earmarked Reserve should be increased from £15,000 to £20,000, subject to the availability of surplus funds at the end of 2026/27.**
3. **Note the updated Forward Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and that the incoming Council will be invited to undertake a visioning and forward-planning exercise following the May 2027 elections.**

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/edenbridge-infrastructure-delivery-plan-2609.pdf

Annex 1: 2026-27 update on Forward Plan summary (click to download).

11 **Councillor Training and Strategic Planning – Budget Provision 2027/28**

Following the May 2027 elections, the new Council and its councillors will need some training, to consider its training requirements, and establish its priorities and aspirations for the next four-year term.

The Council's annual Councillor training budget is usually in the region of £1,000. However, additional provision is required in an election year to support the induction of new Councillors and provide opportunities for the Council to undertake strategic planning.

Below, Members are asked to approve a councillor training budget for 2027/28 £4,595:

1. Consider and approve in principle the Breakthrough Plus subscription at £1,295 plus VAT per annum, for inclusion in the draft 2027/28 budget.
2. Approve in principle a Councillor training budget of £1,500 for 2027/28, reflecting the additional training available through the proposed subscription.
3. Approve in principle a budget provision of £1,800 for a facilitated Councillor visioning and strategic planning session following the May 2027 elections.

The proposed provisions will be referred to the Finance & Governance Committee for consideration as part of the draft 2027/28 budget, before recommendations are made to Full Council in December.

11.1 **Breakthrough Communications – Training and Support Subscription**

The Town Clerk has also been reviewing the training and support available through Breakthrough Communications, which previously provided the Council with access to its Data Protection Toolkit.

The service has since expanded to include training, resources and professional support covering data protection, Freedom of Information (FOI), communications and community engagement.

Breakthrough Communications has offered two subscription options:

1. Breakthrough Pro – £695 plus VAT per annum: Includes essential live training for staff and Councillors, on-demand resources, communications and data protection health checks, best practice updates and two one-to-one advice calls annually.
2. Breakthrough Plus – £1,295 plus VAT per annum: Includes the Pro services, together with access to the full live training programme for staff and Councillors. **Courses cover data protection, FOI, social media, community engagement, chairing meetings, digital safety, artificial intelligence and other relevant topics.**

The Plus subscription could be particularly beneficial in an election year, providing both existing and newly elected Councillors with access to a wider range of training without incurring separate course fees for each attendee. Officers would also benefit from the training and professional resources available.

A copy of the correspondence from Breakthrough Communications is attached for Members' information.

It is proposed that Members consider subscribing to Breakthrough Plus at an annual cost of £1,295 plus VAT, with the cost included in the Council's 2027/28 budget.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

Approve in principle a budget provision of £3,800 for Councillor training and strategic

planning in 2027/28, comprising £2,000 for training and £1,800 for a facilitated visioning and strategic planning session.

1. Consider and approve the proposed Breakthrough Plus subscription at £1,295 plus VAT per annum, for inclusion in the draft 2027/28 budget, subject to confirmation of the subscription arrangements.

Annex 2 Confidential annex is omitted from public papers

11.2 **Councillor Training**

At this stage, it is not known how many new Councillors will be elected in May 2027. Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) provides its Dynamic Councillor training, which is particularly beneficial for newly elected Members, at an estimated cost of £60 per person, plus any associated travel expenses where training is not delivered online.

Throughout the year, both KALC and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) also provide training and briefing sessions covering planning, governance and other matters relevant to parish and town councils.

However, should Members agree to the Breakthrough Plus subscription, a number of training requirements, particularly around GDPR, FOI, communications and social media, could be met through the subscription rather than through individually booked courses.

Recommendation

It is therefore proposed that the Councillor training budget for 2027/28 be set at £1,500. If members opted not to proceed with Breakthrough Communications Plus, this should be considered at £2,000 to provide for induction training and other courses not covered by the subscription.

11.3 **Strategic Planning and Visioning Session**

In September 2023, the Council held a facilitated training and visioning session with James Corrigan, attended by Councillors and officers. The session proved extremely valuable in reviewing the Council's achievements, considering its future role and services, and identifying priorities and aspirations to inform its strategic planning. A copy of the current Strategic Plan and forward planning is published on the website (link below).

It is proposed that a similar session be arranged for the newly elected Council, ideally on a Saturday, allowing Members and officers to work together to review the Council's direction and develop priorities for the next four years.

The session would also provide an opportunity to consider the changing local government landscape, including the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation, future community assets and the Council's financial and operational priorities.

An estimated budget of £1,800 is proposed to allow for a full-day facilitated session, including associated costs.

Recommendation

Approve in principle a budget provision of £1,800 for a facilitated Councillor visioning and strategic planning session following the May 2027 elections.

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/document_category/strategic-plan/

12 **Matters arising from the minutes for report and not elsewhere on the agenda**

12.1 **McMillian Coffee Morning Friday 25 September 2026 - feedback**

The Macmillan Coffee Morning held on 25 September at Rickards Hall was a great success, raising almost £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Cllrs Baker, Aldridge, Jacques and Read came together to organise and support the event, selling cakes and raffle tickets. Councillors and officers generously donated cakes and raffle prizes, helping to make the morning such a success.

Special thanks are also extended to the Council's Planning & Administration Officer, Debbie Bond, who generously gave up her day off to assist with the organisation and running of the event. Her contribution, helped ensure everyone who supported the morning, was greatly appreciated and helped ensure the event ran smoothly.

Members are asked to note the success of the event and the funds raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

12.2 **Remote and hybrid meetings facilities - update**

Following the previous report to Council, the Town Clerk has continued discussions with Ashdown Audio Visual, a company recommended by PS Technology, regarding improvements to the Council's meeting facilities at Doggetts Barn and Rickards Hall, including equipment to support remote and hybrid meetings.

The proposals for Rickards Hall have proved more complex, particularly regarding the need to improve the Hall's acoustics before installing a suitable sound system, microphones and hearing loop facilities. Ashdown Audio Visual is currently investigating appropriate acoustic panels and potential solutions, and a further report will be presented to the next Council meeting.

12.2.1 **Meeting Facilities for Doggetts Barn - to approve the expenditure of £2,625.52**

Ashdown Audio Visual has provided a quotation of £2,625.52 plus VAT for the supply and installation of equipment to be able to improve meeting facilities at Doggetts Barn and enable hybrid meetings.

The proposed equipment includes a wall-mounted 55-inch display screen, video conferencing camera with integrated microphone and noise reduction technology, and the necessary cabling and connections. The system will also connect to the existing hearing loop amplifier.

The proposed improvements will provide greater flexibility in how the Council conducts its meetings and presentations. During the past year, there have been several occasions when the Town Clerk or individual Councillors have been unable to attend meetings in person, where the ability to participate remotely would have been beneficial. The display screen will also provide improved facilities for presentations, including those from external organisations and consultants, and enable documents and reports to be shared electronically during meetings, reducing the need for printed copies. Overall, the improvements will provide more practical and accessible meeting facilities for the Council and other users of the meeting room.

The Council has already made financial provision of £1,500 into EMR (from the 2023-24 budget) for meeting room improvements to its sound and meeting room facilities through an existing Earmarked Reserve.

A copy of the quotation is attached for Members' information (confidential).

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve expenditure of £2,625.52 plus VAT for the supply and installation of the proposed meeting room equipment at Doggetts Barn, to be part funded from the existing Earmarked Reserve for meeting room facilities.

Annex 3 Confidential annex is omitted from public papers

12.3 **Pavilion – Mains water supply project: update and next steps**

Background

As part of the Pavilion heating and hot water project, a second phase was identified to improve the cold-water supply infrastructure, with the original proposal being to convert the building to a fully mains-fed system. At Council's meeting on 8 December 2025 (Minute 118/9.3), it supported proceeding with the replacement of the cold-water storage and supply systems at the Pavilion, following an independent assessment which identified that the existing roof-space water tanks were in poor condition and did not fully comply with current health and safety requirements.

Council appointed Intrinsic Facilities Engineering to undertake the specification, procurement and project management of the works, at a cost of £9,150 plus VAT, funded through the CIL award for the Pavilion heating and water improvement project (meeting December 2025 resolution 118/9.3).

Project Update

Following the successful completion of the new heating and hot water systems earlier this year, Intrinsic has continued progressing the next phase of the project, including liaison with SES Water regarding the new mains water connection.

During the heating and hot water installation, some amendments were made to the water supply infrastructure which will facilitate the next phase of works and reduce the extent of additional work required.

Progress has taken longer than anticipated due to difficulties obtaining confirmation from SES Water that the proposed mains supply could provide sufficient water pressure and flow rates during periods of peak demand at the Pavilion.

With the information provided, Intrinsic has revised the design to ensure a reliable and adequate water supply. The revised proposal provides for a new 32mm mains water connection, together with a new ground-floor cold-water storage tank and modifications to the existing booster pump arrangements. The existing roof-space tanks will be decommissioned. As their physical removal would incur additional costs, it is proposed that they be fully drained, disinfected and disconnected, but remain in situ.

Intrinsic has now completed the technical specification, and the project is ready to proceed to tender.

SES Water Connection

SES Water has provided a quotation of £10,305 plus VAT for its element of the works, including the new mains connection, water meter, associated highway works and disconnection of the existing supply. This was approved April 2026 resolution 136/8.4.1.

This is a separate element of the project from the works covered by Intrinsic's tender specification. The quotation is valid until 31 March 2027, although the final arrangements will need to be confirmed with SES Water when the works are instructed.

Procurement and Next Steps

Intrinsic has prepared the detailed specification for the remaining works, which include the installation of the underground water supply from the site boundary to the Pavilion, new internal connections, replacement cold-water storage arrangements, modifications to the existing booster pumps, and associated electrical, building and commissioning works. *(A copy is available from the Town Clerk for Members should they want to review this.)*

The estimated contract value has yet to be confirmed, and Intrinsic will be asked to provide an indicative cost assessment before commencing procurement.

Subject to the estimated value and the Council's Financial Regulations, it is proposed that competitive quotations be sought from suitably qualified contractors, including MPM Projects, which successfully completed the heating and hot water installation. Should the estimated value require a formal public tender process, this will be undertaken accordingly.

Intrinsic will oversee the procurement process, assess the submissions and provide a recommendation to Council for consideration and approval before any contractor is appointed.

The project will be funded through the CIL allocation previously approved for the Pavilion heating and water improvement works.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. **Note the update on the Pavilion mains water supply project.**
2. **Approve proceeding with the procurement of the remaining works, with Intrinsic overseeing the process and obtaining competitive quotations in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, including undertaking a public tender exercise where required, with the outcome and recommendation reported back to Council for approval.**
3. **Reconfirm the Council's previous approval (April 2026, Minute 136/8.4.1) to proceed with the SES Water connection works at a cost of £10,305 plus VAT, funded from the Pavilion CIL allocation, subject to confirmation of the final quotation and coordination with the main project works.**

12.4 **Planning Committee – Review of Membership**

The Planning Committee's agreed membership is 12 Councillors. There is currently one vacancy, and two existing Committee Members are presently unable to attend meetings, which has affected the Committee's ability to maintain a quorum.

A recent Planning Committee meeting was unable to proceed due to insufficient Members being present. Given the volume and importance of planning matters currently being considered, it is important that the Committee has sufficient active membership to ensure meetings can proceed and Council business is not unnecessarily delayed.

The current membership is:

Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, McArthur, McGregor, Parker, Read, Stockdale, Streets and Todd.

Members are therefore asked to review the Committee's membership and consider appointing additional Councillors to fill the existing vacancy and, where appropriate, replacing those Members who are currently unable to attend, to ensure the Committee can operate effectively.

Recommendation

Members are asked to review and confirm the membership of the Planning Committee, including the appointment of Councillors to fill the existing vacancy and any agreed changes to the current membership, to maintain the Committee's effectiveness and ability to meet its quorum requirements.

12.5 **Edenbridge Food Bank – Lease Agreement**

At its meeting in January 2021 (Minute 9477/11.1.2), the Town Council agreed to permit Edenbridge Food Bank to erect a storage shed on Council-owned land to the rear of the Council offices. Subsequently, in September 2025 (Minute 105/5/10.4), Council approved the

installation of a second shed.

In July 2021, Council agreed that a formal legal agreement should be put in place between the Town Council and the Food Bank for the use of the land. However, at that meeting (Minute 9562/10.1.4), Members resolved not to fund the associated legal costs.

In 2023, Council approved legal expenditure for the preparation of a new lease for another Council tenant. This lease has since been adapted for the Food Bank's use, enabling the arrangements to be formalised without the need to commission an entirely new agreement.

The proposed lease is for a term of seven years, with provision under Clause 35 for the Food Bank to seek a further seven-year term, subject to compliance with its obligations under the lease and agreement of the terms between the parties.

The Food Bank has reviewed the proposed agreement and confirmed that it is satisfied with the terms.

A copy of the proposed lease is attached as a confidential document for Members' consideration and approval.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. **Approve the proposed seven-year lease between Edenbridge Town Council and Edenbridge Food Bank for the use of Council-owned land to the rear of the Council offices.**
2. **Authorise the Town Clerk, the Council Chair and one other Councillor to sign the lease on behalf of the Town Council, subject to the execution requirements of the agreement.**

Annex 4 Confidential annex is omitted from public papers

13 **OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

13.1 **NABMA Annual Conference and Market Team Award ; and to ratify the expenditure of £435**

The Market Officer attended the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Annual Conference in Harrogate earlier this month.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity to hear presentations from other market operators, share experiences and ideas for attracting and retaining traders, and network with colleagues from across the markets sector.

The Town Council was also delighted to receive the NABMA Market Team of the Year Award (Small Markets), recognising the work and commitment of the Council's Market Officer and Council Officers in supporting and developing Edenbridge Market.

Further details of the award and the Council's achievement can be found on the Council's website (link below).

The costs associated with attending the conference were £350 for conference expenses and £85 for travel, totalling £435.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the award and benefits of attending the conference, and ratify expenditure of £435 for the Market Officer's attendance at the NABMA Annual Conference.

13.2 **Annual Health & Safety Audit – 28 September 2026**

The Council's Health & Safety Consultant from WorkNest undertook the annual Health & Safety audit on 28 September 2026.

Whilst the full written report is still awaited, the overall findings were satisfactory, with several matters identified for further consideration and action.

The principal areas highlighted, which may have budget implications, were:

- **Walkways:** Cracks identified in pathways within the cemeteries and Stangrove Park, requiring further assessment and consideration of remedial works.
- **Asbestos Management – Training:** The need to ensure relevant staff receive appropriate asbestos awareness training.
- **Asbestos Management – Procedures:** The establishment of a procedure to ensure that anyone undertaking work which could disturb asbestos-containing materials is made aware of their location before commencing work.

Other matters noted included the reassessment of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workstations, renewal of the electrical safety certificate for Doggetts Barn (which has since been completed), and a vandalised bench in Stangrove Park.

Officers will review the recommendations once the full report is received and progress the necessary actions, with any associated expenditure considered as part of the 2027/28 budget preparations, where appropriate.

Recommendation

That Council notes the annual Health & Safety audit, the principal matters identified and the actions to be progressed by officers.

13.3 **Rickards Hall - Police Engagement Location**

The Neighbourhood Policing Team has been looking for a suitable venue to hold regular community drop-in sessions, providing residents with an opportunity to meet and speak with their local Beat Officer, PC Maunsell or PC McCurry.

The Council Chair, Cllr Baker, has been liaising with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to identify a suitable location, but to date no alternative venue has been secured.

The Police are proposing to commence the sessions on 12 November 2026, initially on a monthly trial basis, with each session lasting approximately one hour.

Members are therefore asked to consider allowing the use of Rickards Hall for these sessions, subject to availability and ensuring that the arrangement does not prevent other potential bookings or income-generating use of the Hall.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the free use of Rickards Hall for the monthly Police Engagement drop-in sessions on an initial trial basis, subject to availability and provided that the sessions do not prevent existing bookings or other anticipated hirers.

14 **Local Government Reorganisation - Update**

Following the report to Council in September, the Government announced on 7 September that it was pausing the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process pending a rapid review of its earlier decisions, following updated legal advice.

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) subsequently advised that, whilst the Government remains

committed to introducing unitary authorities, the anticipated implementation date may be delayed by one year, from April 2028 to April 2029, with elections to the new shadow unitary councils potentially taking place in May 2028.

It is therefore currently expected that elections to Sevenoaks District Council will take place in May 2027, alongside the scheduled Town and Parish Council elections. However, these arrangements remain subject to Government confirmation.

Further clarification had been anticipated during October, but at the time of preparing this report, no further information has been received.

The Town Council will continue to monitor developments, particularly any implications for future service delivery, community assets and the Council's forward planning.

Members are asked to note the update.

15 **Unpaid invoices over 6-months - outstanding Market Pitch Fees**

Members are reminded that KTreatz Ltd has an outstanding balance of £308.40, relating to unpaid market pitch fees for the period October to December 2025.

At its July meeting, Council considered the outstanding debt and resolved to provide one final opportunity for payment before considering further formal recovery action. A final request for payment was issued on 8 July 2026, requesting payment by 6 August 2026.

No payment was received by the deadline. Subsequent correspondence advised that payment would be made by 30 September 2026, pending the outcome of a matter reportedly referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

At its September meeting, Council considered the update and agreed to defer a decision on further recovery action until its November meeting, allowing time for the payment to be made by the date proposed by KTreatz.

However, this date also passed without payment being received. Further correspondence received on 7 October 2026 advised that an outcome from the ICO was still awaited and that payment would be made once this had been received. No revised payment date was provided.

Finance & Governance Committee

At its October meeting, the Finance & Governance Committee considered the outstanding debt and the previous attempts to secure payment.

Members noted that the balance remained unpaid despite the opportunities provided to settle the account.

The Committee Recommended to Full Council to recover the debt via the Small Claims Court.

Recommendation

Members are requested to consider the recommendation of the Finance & Governance Committee and determine whether to proceed with recovery of the outstanding debt through the Small Claims Court. And, to authorise the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Responsible Financial Officer/Deputy Clerk, to take the necessary steps.

16 **Consultations**

17 **To receive reports from councillors who have attended meetings of outside bodies**

18 **Press release**

In view of the confidential nature of Agenda Items 19, 20, 21 to be discussed, the Chairwoman will move that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

19 **[CONFIDENTIAL] Council Property Matters – To consider and approve expenditure for legal advice relating to existing property arrangements.**
Confidential item omitted from public papers.

20 **[CONFIDENTIAL] HMRC VAT Review – Confidential Report**

Confidential item omitted from public papers.

21 **[CONFIDENTIAL] Sevenoaks Local Plan - SDC Council Meeting, 1 December 2026**
Confidential item omitted from public papers.

22 **Date of Next meeting - 07 December**